Dear Paul,

8/20/72

This is a Sunday morning on which I shall change my normal schedule and go for my regular morning walk before breakfast, while my wife enjoys her one luxury, lounging in bed with her favorite tea that I make for her before waking her. On my return I'll have the paper and may indulge a sublimated masochism by actually reading it. I suppose one of the reasons is that of the things immediately ahead, including several letters on matters having no connection with anything of which you know, all are distasteful.

And so, instead of reading, I'll have you a lecture. The idea, which I presume you will find unwelcome, came to me while I was shaving and asking myself what I would do with this half-hour. I know how unwelcome lectures and sermons are. It is always so, saieth the preacher (the last three words comes from Ecclesiastes, a bit of philosophy I find foreign to your generation).

Not Ecclesiates byt Santayana and Martin Luther King give me my text; paraphrases:
He who does not learn from history is doomed to relive it;
He who is silent in the face of evil becomes part of that evil.

Friday I spoke briefly to Bob Smith. He feels that you are somehow cool to him, feeling also that you believe he stole some of your work. He pleads innocent. It was in something he wrote for Bud, for Computers. It also may have been a week ago. I spoke to him both Fridays when I was near Washington, and I was also there Tuesday. He knows that Jim and you are in touch because I discusses your letters with him. I presume those parts on which you place no restrictions.

Now that what he actuallt called "the day of reckoning" is at hand, Bob has misgivings about part of the operation. I don't know what prompts them. I haven't discussed this with him in a year. Yes, a year, that far back, call it "craziness" or not, for it was that far back that I detected the insanities afoot, which is quite different than anticipating them, which I also did and in accordance with it changed all my own plans and abandoned much work already done. A good years ago I discovered by accident that Bob had then been engaged on a research project for Cyril on the medical evidence. He had then spent about three months on it. I think you might wonder why, with all that had been published (Smith doesn't understand that yest, as of my last conversation with him on it), Cyril needed a research project of any kind and if so, why he was in touch with the zanies only on this. It is my understanding that when she learned of it Sylvia was shocked.

Before any of this Cyril and I had been in close enough touch. I had learned that he won't work unless there is profit in it for him. Be sure this includes cash profit. Nonetheless, he is a competent man in his field. He had the two first-completed parts of Rh (and need he more than the second for a "background" to examination?), some of my pictures that you haven't seen, and he made himself copies, being a man of high ethical standards, much of the other knowledge by which I came so hard, and quite specifically, the exact words of the death certificate. This was only on an understanding and a presumption that was not wishful thinking. The understanding confidentiality and the presumption that he would be a witness for me in litigation to drag more of the bone out of the grave. Once he learned everything he thought he needed, our relationship changed. He'd write me letters telling me to call him reverse 'on the phone where the bill is paid by the taxpayers), and he'd not be there and not return the call. When I made a point of this he'd say he returned the call and nobody was home, which was false.

For these and many other reasons I had my own readings. You can credit them or not, but Howard, who has gone through my files at will and random, can confirm this and much more.

Two weeks ago Bud expressed, for the first time and for reasons I neither know nor inquired into, misgivings about what is afoot. I just gave him an encapsulation of my own views and went on to the other things for which I'd gone to see him. Bob now says why should there be any backgrounding, why should he not just go in and observe, one of the questions that should sound familiar to you, "craziness" or not, and too late all around, for the observation, for whatever value it could have had, is already tainted.

I have not engaged in distributions of the relatively few things I have written on this, albeit in some cases at some length, because I see nothing to be gained by it and the possibility of further and needless damages. Thus I can't even remember what I've sent you. But I tell you that as of two days ago, the plan was for Cyril to have what in reality is probably less than a minute for each piece of photographic material, which is hardly time for a decent inventory, forgetting about notes and observations and other things of this kind, and the next day for an operation I will be pleasantly surprise if I learn it is not

one of the larger and more deliberate larcenies. So, with gold in his hand, he becomes an alchemist. We will have the future in which to contemplate this. Quietly I have done what I can to influence what may or may not happen and what the result of results may be. It may turn out that, whether or not under these influences, the danger that remains a clear possibility if not the official intent, had been thwarted or dulled and that the one damage will be to me. And if this does not come to pass, which I regard as of today as unlikely, it is a lesson I will not permit myself to forget.

In the course of learning it I have learned what I would never have considered possible about some of the people we know. For the moment I restrict myself to one, Gary. I went after him with what others will regard as vigor but with what for me and my feelings, including toward him, was restraint. It took him six weeks to react, and then it was stupid and unthinking (you've heard those words before, too). To defend himself he sent me absolutely irrefutable proof of the complete accuracy of my accusations, including of his intent. I would never had believed this possible. Take my word or not, in nor area is any doubt possible. If this is not the Gary either of us thought he knew, it is the real Gary. I can't tell you why and it is one of things about which I will not permit myself to think because of the more obvious possible conclusions.

One part of the Old Testament that does not linger within me is the eye-for-an-eye but. I've never felt that way and feel less than ever that way as the years pile up. So, I've sent this to but two critics, one because of a very warm personal feeling toward Gary and the other Howard, for him to keep. In each case I stipulated that it never be used to hurt Gary, no more.

You know of the conscious risks I have run and I think why. You knew how conscious the risk with Joan Christian for we discussed it in his friends office when you were xeroxing the part of what I that far back had carried with me so you and Maggie could do this. You never completed what I that far back carried, not having time to get to that which is in it, and long ago was too busy socially, such the genuineness of her interest. You knew of my sanguine view toward Garrison if not as early as it might have been, early enough. There are others, but you know, personally, that risks I have been willing to run.

What history shows us is that in no single case was it worth it and in each and every case it was not constructive. I can run off a few of your experience, like Lesterman and Joesten. Remember what Bud did with Davison, when he had promised not to? How long a list, how much work killed or frustrated or at least made more difficult must there be before we, and I sure as hell mean YOU, learn from these things? As kids, when we picked up one hot iron it was enough. Have we less sense as adults?

Lately I have been much too busy with what should never have taken a minute of my time, doing Bud and Jim's work or the Ray habeas corpus petition. I gave them the client, the case, the material needed for the petition, and then I went out and gathered an enormous amount of material for affidavits in support. With all fo this they have done incompetently, really stupidly. So, to salvage this, which is important with a live defendant to get into court -and one to keep alive- I've spent more time than writing a book would require in exasperated and exasperating efforts to make of this what it can be, a victory even in legal defeat, and to make the prospects of the latter less likely. I regret that this is not yet over, for with each new thing I get there is a new incompetence, a new stupidity, and this from bright people.

We should learn from this, too. Believe me, I will. I'll see this through, but that is the end.

Paul, add together all that you have seen, gotten and heard from that wierd assortment with whom you have been in touch and with the exception of JIMS, what of real value have you gotten, what of real value have they done or published? Take the likes of Fred. Even when I gave him the originals of the pictures with which he worked, he couldn't even do a rational job on that. He fucked it up, discrediting other work that is substantial and not his. These are just weirdos.and there is nothing but trouble with them. The critical community, with few exceptions, is chaconnadias of Sprague, who in his way has killed more than one man's share.

There are very few of us who have done anything of real worth. And we have spent and wasted an enormous amout of precious time and effort in the futilities you are determined to pursue. They don't learn, they won't learn, they can't learn, they haven't helped, they never will help, they can hurt as almost without exception they have. and any one of these should be enough to tell an adult of serious intent that the iron is hot.

Years ago we learned of the bruns, didn't we?

Anyway, I did.

So with me, from now on, things will be different, I take a very hard line on this. I have already and I will not deviate. I haven t enough time left and I've frittered away too much. My views are quite simple. On the ethics, I believe that he who would teach the pope religion should go to church himself.

On the pragmatic level, the hell with those who have done nothing, can do nothing or by even slight possibility can hurt.

On the moral level, there are the street-corners or the houses for the whore, but no place for them here.

And on the operating level, I will in any event have many fewer working relationships, if this can, indeed, be a description of some, and none with those who insist on conditions other than life has taught me are essential. If this means total isolation, that it will be. You, of course, are a free agent and can and will make your own decisions and have your own policy.

One of the things that is inevitable, given the permeating dishonesty of the majority of nuts and ambitious self-seekers who constitute the so-called critical community is that I can no longer dare bring to light what can be misused and what wit every one of the thefts to date has been. If it doesn t happen again, the risk is not worth the possibility.

It has been years since getting people to think the WR was invalid meant anything. Not that remains the goal and the dream of those whose work is all past as it is of the nuts who have persisted. What for years has been much more important is why it is wrong, who made it wrong, for what reasons, and the wide assortments of other related concerns. If one with your intelligence reaches your years without having thought of this or taken the time to think of it, it is like a snake that has started to swallow and has taken in enough so he can't stop.

I have never asked your purposes or the basis of your interest, but I presume you have no delight in flogging dead horses.

Anyway, this has rambled at greater length than I had intended. I wanted to inform you about Gary, whether or not you believe it and for whatever interpretation you may want to place on it and whatever twisting you may want to give it to justify your own position. And I want you to be without doubt about my course henceforth and that upon which I will insist not only without deviation but without even considering it. If I can learn from history I can learn. And the recent years are not of a kind I would consider reliving.

More, there have been so many futilities, I am not about to undertake or consider risking any more. If my mind did not tell me this is the only rational course, what all of this has done to us financially leaves nothing else remotely possible.

As you have refused to really think other than you have become accustomed to t inking in the past, which really means not to think about those things that do not occur to you on your own or to try and consider areas foreign to your thinking of the past, that is your right and your own affair. It is an inflexibility and an immaturity I'd not expect of your intelligence. But then I've learned that intelligence is also irrelevant in all of this mess. Those with the worst records have the higher intelligences. This, too, is a lesson of history, from antiquity to Kissinger. Let me illustrate this with an example you should comprehend despite your intellectual inflexibility (my purpose is not insult, but I do want your attention, do want you to think this through). Is there a finer intelligence than Sylvia's? So, at the outset, and after having read his book, and with all her proclaimed dedication to the Oswald cause, her own formulation, Epstein becomes God and all others must be at least diminished. When When everyone else has learned that Epsteink is really Lucifer, she persists in telling him it and must be Dean and continues to try and make him God. I had them, if the record of which you know is inadequate. When she disagrees with you. So, naturally, you are some kind of agents (Salandria and Penn Jones have the same visions). Nor is there any alternative. And now she has had, I regret, some kind of crackup, I hope not too serious. So, is even intelligence a factor today? Sincerely,